

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
STATE OF MONTANA

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**Governor Steve Bullock Signs Bill Improving Suicide Prevention Efforts in Montana Schools**

Helena, MT – Responding to a series of youth suicides in Montana, Governor Steve Bullock today hosted a ceremonial bill signing of a piece of legislation to combat this trend. Bullock was joined by bill sponsor, Rep. Edie McClafferty, at the signing at the Butte Health Department.

“Montana must do more to combat youth suicides in the state,” Bullock said of the measure. “This law will ensure that teachers and faculty members will know the signs demonstrated by students contemplating suicide, and ensure they know how best to address them.”

The law instructs the Montana Office of Public Instruction to develop a suicide awareness and prevention training curriculum for faculty and staff at schools, as well as recommending training for staff throughout the state.

“There is no community in Montana that has escaped the pain of youth suicide. Here in Butte, we know that pain all too well,” McClafferty said. “That is why I agreed to carry this bill during the 2015 legislative session. I strongly believe that as a school teacher, I want to be sure that my colleagues and I are doing everything we can to support students who are struggling, and ensure we’re able to take action in a timely and responsible manner.”

Since taking office, Bullock has worked to reduce suicides in Montana, as well as continuing to work to identify the causes of Montana’s high suicide rate. In addition to the legislation signed today, Bullock also provided funding for suicide prevention efforts in tribal communities in the budget he signed into law. He also signed into law measures to bolster the state’s community mental health infrastructure. In 2013, Bullock established the Suicide Review Team to identify the factors associated with suicide, in an effort to develop prevention strategies.

Studies have shown that suicide is the third leading cause of death among Americans aged 15-24.

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